

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7, and 8 are pending; Claim 8 is amended; and no claims are newly added or canceled herewith. As the amendment to Claim 8 addresses a minor informality, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

Applicants thank Examiner Chen for the interview granted Applicants' representative on April 28, 2004. During the interview, the outstanding rejection of Claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Saijo et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,825,241, hereafter Saijo) in view of Shoji et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,228, hereafter Shoji) was discussed.

As explained during the interview, MPEP § 716.02(e) sets forth the requirements for showing unexpected results. To this end, Figure 14 of the present application shows granularity and the omission of the trailing edge of a halftone image estimated by varying the development gap Gp between 0.35 and 0.6 and the doctor gap Gd. As described in the specification at page 44, when AC was superposed on DC under the conditions shown in Figure 14, the granularity level was more improved with a decrease in the ratio of Gp/Gd. As illustrated in Figure 14, granularity and omission ranks of four and above are good. With the claimed ratio of Gp/Gd, as illustrated in Figure 14, the granularity and omission ranks are improved.

In contrast, as illustrated in Figure 15, when a conventional magnet roller lacking auxiliary poles and having a main pole whose half width is about 48° is used, although AC replacing DC reduces granularity, no correlation exists between the ratio Gp/Gd and the granularity rank. While granularity decreases with a decrease in the development gap Gp, the omission of a trailing edge is aggravated, as illustrated in Figure 15. Thus, as set forth in

Figure 15, without the claimed ratio Gp/Gd, it is not possible to satisfy requirements for both granularity level and omission level.

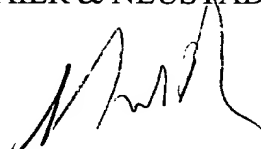
Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants have satisfied the requirements of MPEP § 716.02(e), and it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection of Claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Additionally, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 1-4, 8, and 10 are allowed. Because the present amendment addresses the minor informality noted in Claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 8 and 10 remain in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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